Evaluation Resource Guide for Children's Bureau Discretionary Grantees

Second Edition

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Submitted to

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Disclaimer

For more information, please visit the Children's Bureau website at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb.

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Introduction to This Guide

Organizations that receive federal grants to implement child welfare programs are generally required to conduct systematic program evaluations of their funded projects. Those that are new to the world of federal funding or have limited evaluation experience may need resources to help design and implement comprehensive, high-quality evaluations. Moreover, experienced researchers and program evaluators who have not worked in the child welfare field may also benefit from information about how to design evaluations specific to the child welfare context.

Since the original publication of the *Evaluation Resource Guide* in 2011, the quantity and quality of resources on program evaluation and related fields has grown considerably. This revised and expanded guide offers an up-to-date list of resources that can be used to inform and enhance the evaluations of child welfare initiatives funded through the Children's Bureau discretionary grant program.[1] While the guide includes information that is particularly relevant to grantees and others in the child welfare field, it also serves as a general resource for researchers and evaluators in a range of health and human service fields.

The guide's user-friendly format allows readers to easily locate resources of interest:

- Click in the table of contents to navigate to a specific topic.
- Each section lists free, online resources, followed by widely available print publications, if applicable. Most resources are listed alphabetically, except where resources that are particularly pertinent to child welfare audiences are listed first.
- Titles of online resources are hyperlinked; click on a title to visit the resource.
- The appendix includes a summary matrix of all online resources included in the guide.

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[1] See https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/grants/discretionary-grant for more information about CB's discretionary grants program.

Understanding Program Evaluation

This section includes resources on program evaluation and applied research. It begins with resources that provide an overview of program evaluation, followed by resources specific to the child welfare field. It then lists resources on key components of a high-quality program evaluation or related research activities: needs assessments, logic models, theories of change, evaluability assessments, assessment of program implementation and fidelity, cost analyses/cost studies, and building evidence of program effectiveness.

General Resources on Program Evaluation

The resources in this subsection provide a general overview of program evaluation concepts and activities, including design guidelines and toolkits. These resources are most relevant to nonresearch audiences, such as program staff and managers, interested in building their personal or organizational evaluation knowledge and capacity.

Electronic Resources

Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation, 2nd Edition

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 2010

This comprehensive guide reviews the purpose and roles of program evaluation and strategies for identifying an evaluator and managing the evaluation process, developing a logic model and evaluation plan, reporting evaluation findings, and using evaluation results to improve programs that benefit children and families.

The Administration for Children and Families Common Framework for Research and Evaluation

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 2016

This document outlines approaches to conducting research and evaluation to generate knowledge and answer empirical questions about human service programs and services. It describes two broad categories of research and evaluation—descriptive research and impact research—including their purposes, empirical and theoretical justifications, and quality of evidence that can be generated from them.

[The Step-by-Step Guide to Evaluation: How to Become Savvy Evaluation Consumers](#)

W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2017

This updated guide is designed for grantees, nonprofits, and community organizations with little or no formal evaluation experience. It covers evaluation basics such as selecting an appropriate research design, understanding the importance of community engagement and racial equity in the evaluation process, and communicating evaluation findings.

[Basic Guide to Program Evaluation](#)

McNamara, C., Authenticity Consulting LLC, adapted from the Field Guide to Nonprofit Program Design, Marketing and Evaluation, n.d.

Helpful to both for-profit and nonprofit programs, this web-based document offers strategies to plan and implement evaluations. The guide discusses when program evaluation is most helpful, who should carry out the evaluation, basic components of an evaluation plan, how to select the most effective methods, and how to avoid common evaluation pitfalls.

[BetterEvaluation](#)

Australia and New Zealand School of Government

The BetterEvaluation website was developed to improve the practice and theory of evaluation by creating and curating information on evaluation methods and processes to strengthen evaluation capacity. The website supports three connected areas of activity: evaluation practice, evaluation capacity strengthening, and research and development in evaluation.

[Building Evaluation Capacity in Human Services Organizations](#)

James Bell Associates, 2013

This brief offers steps to improve an organization's internal capabilities in data collection, analysis, and reporting. It also offers suggestions for increasing buy-in to the evaluation process among frontline staff and managers and for enhancing the credibility of evaluation findings.

[Evaluative Thinking](#)

The Bruener Foundation

Developed and supported by the Bruener Foundation for nonprofit funders and their partners, Evaluative Thinking is a portal to resources on evaluation capacity building and evaluative thinking to promote better organizational planning and decision making. Resources include an Evaluation

Capacity Building Clearinghouse and instructional bulletins on topics such as survey development, interviews, observational techniques, and case record reviews.

Introduction to Program Evaluation for Public Health Programs: A Self-Study Guide

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Program Performance and Evaluation Office, 2011

This web-based resource is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Framework for Program Evaluation in Public Health. It links to a 100-page manual with chapters on how to engage stakeholders, clarify a program, design an evaluation, gather credible evidence, draw conclusions, and share findings.

The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation

National Science Foundation, Division of Research, Evaluation, and Communication, 2002

This handbook defines program evaluation, identifies key components of an evaluation, and explores important issues to consider when planning an evaluation. The handbook is divided into four main sections: (1) evaluation and types of evaluation, (2) steps in conducting an evaluation, (3) overview of qualitative and quantitative methods, and (4) strategies for implementing a culturally responsive evaluation. The handbook also includes a glossary of commonly used evaluation terms.

Web Center for Social Research Methods

Cornell University, Cornell Office for Research on Evaluation

This comprehensive portal links to information on a range of design and methodological topics for social science researchers and evaluators. Highlights include (1) a research and evaluation "knowledge database" that covers topics such as defining a research question, sampling, measurement, research design, and data analysis; (2) research method tutorials on subjects such as sampling, internal and external validity, and construct validity; (3) an online statistical advisor that helps users select appropriate statistical tests for their data; (4) a resource guide for concept mapping; and (5) a "simulation handbook" that includes a manual and computer exercises for researchers interested in running simple computer simulations as part of applied social science research designs.

[What's the Difference? Understanding Process and Outcome Evaluation](#)

James Bell Associates, 2007

This brief defines the key differences between a process evaluation (which focuses on early startup and program implementation) and an outcome evaluation (which focuses on longer term program results), and outlines the steps to conduct each in a systematic manner.

Print Resources

Bamberger, M., Rugh, J., Church, M., & Fort, L. (2004). Shoestring evaluation: Designing impact evaluations under budget, time, and data constraints. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *25*, 5–37. doi.org/10.1177%2F109821400402500102

Barrett, N. F. (2015). *Program evaluation: A step-by-step guide* (Revised ed.). Springfield, IL: Sunnycrest Press.

Davidson, E. J. (2005). *Evaluation methodology basics: The nuts and bolts of sound evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Engel, R. J., & Shutt, R. K. (2017.) *The practice of research in social work* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fraser, M. W., Richman, J. M., Galinsky, M. J., & Day, S. H. (2009). *Intervention research: Developing social programs.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

National Institutes of Health Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research. (2018). *Best practices for mixed methods research in the health sciences* (2nd ed.). Bethesda, MD: Author.

Newcomer, K. E., Hatry, H. P., & Wholey J. S. (2015). *Handbook of practical program evaluation* (3rd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation: The new century text* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rossi, P., Lipsey, M. W., & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A systematic approach* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Evaluation in Child Welfare Contexts

While extensive resources are available for designing and implementing program evaluations in an array of human services fields, this section emphasizes resources that are especially relevant to evaluating child welfare services and programs. Additional resources relevant to child welfare may also be found in other sections of the guide, and the matrix at the end of the guide highlights resources that are particularly relevant to child welfare evaluation.

Electronic Resources

Building Capacity to Improve Program Evaluation in Child Welfare

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau

This website provides links that help answer important questions about program design, capacity, collaboration, implementation, participation, service delivery, and effectiveness. Many resources offer practical tools specifically for program directors and evaluators of Children's Bureau-supported grants, and others offer a broader view for practitioners, faculty, community members, students, and agency leadership.

Child Welfare Evaluation Virtual Summit Series

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau

This series of 17 videos combines illustration, animation, motion graphics, and content to tackle evaluation-related topics that are pertinent to the child welfare field, including cost analysis, constructing meaningful comparison groups, and conducting evaluations in tribal communities. The videos propose solutions to common evaluation challenges, such as overcoming concerns about data sharing, and direct viewers to additional tools and resources. The videos are intended to build evaluation capacity among child welfare organizations and promote dialogue among Children's Bureau discretionary grantees and other evaluation stakeholders.

Critical Issues in Evaluating Child Welfare Programs

James Bell Associates, 2009

This brief compiles lessons learned from evaluations of Children's Bureau discretionary grant programs. It outlines common challenges in designing and implementing evaluations in a child welfare context and identifies strategies to overcome barriers and strengthen evaluations.

Evaluating Systems and Organizational Change in Child Welfare Settings

James Bell Associates, 2016

Child welfare improvement efforts often occur in complex organizational environments. This brief draws on the current evaluation literature and the experiences of Children's Bureau discretionary grantees to outline strategies to evaluate system-level and organizational changes in child welfare settings. An **At-a-Glance** supplemental resource for this brief is also available.

FRIENDS Evaluation Toolkit

FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

This toolkit can help program managers, administrators, and other interested parties develop and implement evaluation processes that are useful in daily practice and provide evidence that the programs positively affect the lives of children and families. Toolkit topics include designing an evaluation plan, building a logic model, and identifying outcomes and indicators. The toolkit also includes a compendium of annotated measurement instruments for evaluating child abuse prevention-related outcomes.

FRIENDS Online Learning Center

FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

The FRIENDS Online Learning Center provides high-quality, subject-specific training free of charge for National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention state lead agencies, their grantees, and other child welfare organizations. It offers access to continuing education and professional development opportunities on topics such as continuous quality improvement (CQI), data collection and analysis, logic models, and building evidence for effective maltreatment prevention programs.

A Roadmap for Collaborative and Effective Evaluation in Tribal Communities

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Tribal Workgroup, 2013

This document presents an approach to program evaluation in tribal communities that is culturally relevant, is driven by the needs and interests of tribal nations, and draws on effective evaluation methods informed by indigenous practices. The **accompanying video** shows representatives from the Children's Bureau Tribal Workgroup unveiling the document's roadmap to an audience at the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center Summer Institute at Johns Hopkins University.

Needs Assessments

This subsection highlights resources on conducting a needs assessment for a target population or community and identifying gaps in an existing service continuum. Needs assessments are typically conducted before a program is designed and implemented, and they often employ the same research and data collection tools as a program evaluation, which assesses the degree to which a program has addressed the identified needs.

Electronic Resources

Community Needs Assessment

Child Welfare Information Gateway

This website compiles resources on conducting needs assessments and includes examples of community and statewide needs assessments, such as the following:

- *Early Childhood Needs and Resources Community Assessment Tool*, National League of Cities
- *Planning and Program Development: Community Needs Assessment*, Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice

Program Assessment

FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

This web page includes a brief overview of the benefits of conducting a needs assessment. It also provides links to resources to help jurisdictions conduct systematic self-assessments and use their findings to encourage CQI, including the following:

- *Selecting a Family Support and Strengthening Program Assessment Tool: An Overview for Program Leaders and Funders*, by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, FRIENDS, and the National Network of Family Support and Strengthening Networks
- *Understanding the Role of Program Assessment in Child Abuse Prevention: Tools for Peer Review and Beyond*, by FRIENDS
- *Standards of Quality for Family Strengthening and Support: Program Self-Assessment*, by California Network of Family Strengthening Networks
- *The Strengthening Families Self-Assessment Tool for Community-Based Programs*, by the Center for the Study of Social Policy

Assessing Community Needs and Resources

University of Kansas, Center for Community Health and Development

This free online resource offers tips and tools to build healthier communities and foster social change. It includes guidance on assessing community needs and resources and provides concrete examples of needs assessments completed both in the United States and abroad.

Best Practices for Conducting a Needs and Resource Assessment: Tip Sheet

Healthy Teen Network, 2011

This tip sheet reviews best practices for conducting a community needs assessment. The document outlines the essential steps in the needs assessment process, including establishing a needs assessment workgroup, developing a data collection plan, and linking assessment findings to a logic model.

Checklist for Conducting Needs Assessment Surveys

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, 2018

This checklist helps users determine when and how to conduct a needs assessment.

Community Needs Assessment: Participant Workbook

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013

This free, downloadable workbook provides guidance on assessing community needs and resources. The workbook consists of several modules that instruct users on each phase of the needs assessment process, including initial planning, reviewing available data, and creating a community action plan.

Conducting a Community Assessment

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Community Services, Compassion Capital Fund National Resource Center, 2010

This resource reviews the benefits of conducting a community needs assessment and the process for conducting one. The appendices include examples of a memorandum of understanding, worksheets for planning an assessment, tips on locating secondary information sources and determining key findings, and an action plan template.

Print Resources

Altschuld, J. W. (2010). *The needs assessment kit*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kaufman, R., & Guerra-Lopez, I. (2013). *Needs assessment for organizational success*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.

Royse, D., Staton-Tindall, M., Badger, K., & Webster, M. (2009). *Needs assessment: Pocket guide to social work research methods*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Sleezer, C. M., Russ-Eft, D. F., & Gupta, K. (2014). *A practical guide to needs assessment* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Stoecker, R. (2013). Research methods for community change (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Logic Models

This subsection lists resources on logic models, which can serve as "roadmaps" for designing a program evaluation and assessing its progress. Logic models typically identify key program inputs and activities, their outputs and short-term outcomes, and intermediate and long-term outcomes for the program's target population.

Electronic Resources

Developing a Logic Model

James Bell Associates, 2007

This brief describes the purpose and components of logic models. It outlines reasons for developing a logic model, identifies key logic model components, and provides examples of both client- and systems-level logic models in child welfare program contexts.

Logic Model Builder

FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention and the Child Welfare Information Gateway

The Logic Model Builder, a component of FRIENDS' comprehensive Evaluation Toolkit, is a step-by-step guide through the process of developing a logic model to facilitate program evaluation activities for child abuse and neglect prevention, family support, parenting, and postadoption services

programs. It includes the following components: program vision, target populations, population needs, services offered, resources, assumptions, outcomes, indicators, and measurement tools.

Logic Model Development Guide

W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004

This guide provides practical assistance to nonprofits that seek to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs by conducting outcome-oriented evaluations. The guide reviews the basic principles of logic models and their role in enhancing program planning, implementation, and dissemination activities.

Logic Models

University of Wisconsin-Extension, Program Development and Evaluation Unit

This website offers a comprehensive set of resources on developing and interpreting logic models, including templates and a teaching and training guide. It also hosts an online course that instructs program practitioners on how to build and apply logic models.

Print Resources

Epstein, D., & Klerman, J. A. (2012). When is a program ready for rigorous impact evaluation? The role of a falsifiable logic model. *Evaluation Review*, *36*(5), 375–401. doi.org/10.1177%2F0193841X12474275

Frechtling, J. A. (2007). *Logic modeling methods in program evaluation*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Knowlton, L. W., & Phillips, C. C. (2013). *The logic model guidebook: Better strategies for great results* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Theories of Change

Often regarded as a precursor to logic models, theories of change articulate the theoretical underpinnings of an intervention by describing how it addresses the needs of a target community or population and by formulating the logical linkages between specific activities and desired results. These linkages and results can then be operationalized into the evaluation "language" of outputs and outcomes in a subsequent logic model.

Electronic Resources

Theory of Change

Capacity Building Center for States, 2018

This monograph—targeted to child welfare agency leaders, managers, and service partners—defines a theory of change and explains its importance for implementing effective programs and systems change. It outlines the steps to create a theory of change that addresses an identified problem or opportunity for improvement, charts pathways of change, and articulates assumptions regarding why and how a chosen intervention or strategy is expected to succeed.

Mapping Change: Using a Theory of Change to Guide Planning and Evaluation

Mackinnon, A., & Amott, N., Grantcraft, 2006

This document describes the difference between logic models and theories of change, explains the role of theories of change in evaluation planning, provides a detailed example of a theory of change developed by a grantee organization, and addresses commonly asked questions about theories of change.

Theory of Change: Methodological Briefs

Rogers, P., UNICEF, 2014

This document helps international aid organizations understand and develop theories of change. It describes an ongoing process for revisiting and modifying a theory of change over time in response to implementation challenges and evolving organizational and systems contexts.

What Is Theory of Change?

ActKnowledge

The website of the Center for Theory of Change, a nonprofit organization established by ActKnowledge, explains the creation and use of theories of change in the context of international development, education, and human rights campaigns. It includes information on an online software tool for developing theories of change.

Print Resources

Dhillon, L., & Vaca, S. (2018). Refining theories of change. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Evaluation*, *14*(30), 64–87.

Funnell, S. C., & Rogers, P. J. (2011). *Purposeful program theory: Effective use of theories of change and logic models.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.

Evaluability Assessments

This subsection provides resources on evaluability assessments, a process through which evaluators, program staff, and other stakeholders review and clarify program models to ensure their core components are clearly articulated and ready to undergo more rigorous program evaluation. An evaluability assessment is a critical step in building the evidence base for effective child welfare programs and practices.

Electronic Resources

Evaluability Assessment: Examining the Readiness of a Program for Evaluation

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center and Justice Research and Statistics Association, 2003

This document introduces the concept of evaluability assessment to program managers and details a process to help programs determine whether service models are ready for evaluation, and what type of evaluation is most appropriate.

Evaluability Assessment for Impact Evaluation: Guidance, Checklists, and Decision Support

Peersman, G., Guijt, I., & Pasanen, T., The Methods Lab, 2015

This online guide describes the process of conducting an evaluability assessment to determine whether a program is ready for an impact evaluation, along with key steps in planning an impact evaluation. It includes checklists for use during the evaluability assessment process and recommendations for using the results from an evaluability assessment.

Planning Evaluability Assessments: A Synthesis of the Literature With Recommendations

United Kingdom Department of International Development, 2013

This report describes the results of a review of evaluability assessment research. It compares, contrasts, and identifies commonalities in different approaches to evaluability assessment, and offers recommendations for conducting future assessments.

Program Evaluability Assessment Checklist

Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness, n.d.

This brief checklist guides program and evaluation staff through a series of questions to support the assessment of a service model's strengths and potential areas for improvement. It can be used to assess a program model's readiness to undergo a comprehensive outcome evaluation by determining the degree to which the program model has been fully operationalized.

Assessment of Program Implementation and Fidelity

This subsection includes resources on measuring program implementation and fidelity. Fidelity examines the degree to which a program has been implemented as intended. The assessment of implementation and fidelity is a critical part of a comprehensive evaluation because it identifies important mediating variables and implementation factors that affect short- and long-term program outcomes.

Electronic Resources

National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, FPG Child Development Institute

NIRN seeks to improve the implementation of evidence-based programs and practices. Its website provides a variety of resources on measuring implementation and program fidelity, including briefs, white papers, presentations, and videos.

Measuring Implementation Fidelity

James Bell Associates, 2009

This brief provides an overview of implementation fidelity and underscores its importance in identifying and understanding client, program, organizational, and contextual factors that influence program outcomes. Fidelity is explored across five dimensions: adherence, exposure, quality of delivery, participant responsiveness, and program differentiation.

[**Fidelity 101: How to Develop, Validate and Use Fidelity Measures to Inform Implementation in Child Welfare**](#)

Kaye, S., & Holder, T., University of Maryland, 2011

This presentation explains the importance of measuring fidelity, illustrates the development of fidelity criteria, and suggests data collection strategies to support the assessment of fidelity during the implementation of child welfare interventions.

[**Lessons Learned Through the Application of Implementation Science Concepts to Children's Bureau Discretionary Grant Programs**](#)

James Bell Associates, 2013

This report explores over 100 organizational characteristics, processes, and activities, including several factors outlined in the National Implementation Research Network implementation science framework, that facilitate the successful implementation of Children's Bureau discretionary grant programs.

Print Resources

Barbee, A. P., Christensen, D., Antle, B., Wandersman, A., & Cahn, K. (2011). Successful adoption and implementation of a comprehensive casework practice model in a public child welfare agency: Application of the getting to outcomes (GTO) model. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *33*(5), 622–633.

Bartley L. H., Bright, C. L., & DePanfilis, D. (2017). Contributors to fidelity of child welfare-related interventions: A review. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, *11*(4–5), 433–463. doi.org/10.1080/15548732.2017.1340222

Dariotis, J. K., Bumbarger, B. K., Duncan, L. G., & Greenberg, M. T. (2008). How do implementation efforts relate to program adherence? Examining the role of organizational, implementer, and program factors. *Journal of Community Psychology*, *36*, 744–760.

Cost Analyses/Cost Studies

This subsection lists resources for designing and implementing cost analyses and studies, including resources on methods to quantify and measure the costs of implementing child welfare and other human service programs. Cost analysis approaches include descriptive studies (e.g., measuring total program costs or costs per case); cost-effectiveness analysis (e.g., the cost of achieving a

successful outcome for an individual case); and cost-benefit analysis (e.g., the net financial benefits of a program or service as measured by its total monetized benefits minus its total costs).

Electronic Resources

[Cost Analysis in Program Evaluation: A Guide for Child Welfare Researchers and Service Providers](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Cost Workgroup, 2013

This guide supports child welfare service providers and evaluators interested in conducting cost analyses as part of broader evaluations of child welfare services. It presents a framework for integrating cost analysis into program evaluations, presents key cost analysis principles and concepts, explains core steps to conduct a cost analysis, and describes the advantages and disadvantages of specific methods for collecting and analyzing cost data.

[Cost Analysis in Program Evaluation Video Series](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau

This two-part video series provides an overview of key cost analysis concepts and discusses why and how to perform cost analysis in child welfare program settings. The target audience includes agency directors, program managers, frontline staff, and evaluators.

[Waiver Demonstration Cost Evaluation Toolkit](#)

James Bell Associates, 2017

This toolkit, designed primarily for state child welfare agencies implementing Title IV-E waiver demonstrations, helps program managers, financial staff, and evaluators conduct cost evaluations. The toolkit currently consists of two modules:

Module A: Program-Level Cost Analysis

This module provides guidance on capturing program-level costs by expenditure category and program activity type. It outlines a five-step process for planning, implementing, and reporting on a program-level cost analysis, and it includes numerous tools and worksheets.

Module B: Case-Level Cost Analysis

This module guides evaluators and program and financial staff in conducting a case-level analysis of the cost of serving individual families. It describes a four-step process for planning, implementing, and reporting on a case-level analysis, and it includes an appendix with worksheets, spreadsheets, a glossary, frequently asked questions, and other resources.

[Benefit-Cost Analysis in the Evaluation of Child Welfare Programs](#)

Foster, E. M., & Holden, E. W., 2004

This article presents a framework for designing a benefit-cost analysis of child welfare programs, describes the structure of the analysis, identifies potential data sources, and notes potential challenges in conducting the analysis.

[Cost-Benefit Analysis](#)

Child Welfare Information Gateway

This web page briefly describes cost-benefit analysis from the perspective of child welfare organizations and includes links to several studies that examine the cost-effectiveness of child welfare programs across the county.

[Economic Evaluation Research in the Context of Child Welfare Policy: A Structured Literature Review and Recommendations](#)

Goldhaber-Fiebert, J. K., Snowden, L. R., Wulczyn, F., Landsverk, J., & Horwitz, S. M., 2011

This article examines the economic evaluation literature on interventions to improve outcomes for children at risk for, and currently involved with, the child welfare system; identifies areas where additional research is needed; and discusses the use of decision-analytic modeling to advance child welfare policy and practice.

Building the Evidence Base for Child Welfare Programs and Practice

Child welfare systems and programs have historically been characterized by a lack of conclusive evidence of their effectiveness in improving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and families. In response to increased expectations from federal and state agencies for accountability and demonstrable impacts on child welfare populations, a growing body of resources

has emerged that seeks to improve the quality and rigor of child welfare evaluations. This section lists some of the most salient resources on building evidence in the child welfare field, including both recent tools and older resources that remain relevant and useful.

Electronic Resources

A Framework to Design, Test, Spread, and Sustain Effective Practice in Child Welfare

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, Child Welfare Research and Evaluation Framework Workgroup, 2014

This document describes a framework for exploring problems in child welfare, developing interventions, building evidence for their effectiveness, integrating effective interventions into routine child welfare practice, and continually improving their implementation. The framework is designed to promote better integration of evaluation with program and policy decision making and encourage stronger partnerships among child welfare program managers, funders, and evaluators. The related **video series** can be found on the Children's Bureau website.

Getting to Outcomes: Improving Community-Based Prevention

The RAND Corporation

Getting to Outcomes is a 10-step model to help organizations plan, implement, evaluate, and improve prevention programs. Incorporating concepts from traditional evaluation, empowerment evaluation, results-based accountability, and CQI, the model enhances practitioners' skills and empowers them to plan, implement, and evaluate their own programs. The website includes resources for applying the model to a range of programs, such as teen pregnancy prevention, home visiting, underage drinking prevention, and services for homeless veterans.

Measurement Tools for Child Welfare

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare

This section of the California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare website informs users about screening and assessment tools commonly used in the child welfare field and rates them on the strength of their psychometric properties (e.g., validity, reliability, sensitivity) and relevance to child welfare programs and practice.

[Outcome Measurement in Nonprofit Organizations: Current Practices and Recommendations](#)

Morley, E., Vinso, E., & Hatry, H. P., 2001

This report surveys the state of outcome measurement as implemented by private nonprofit service organizations and offers examples of strategies used by these organizations to implement and use results from outcome measurement. The appendices include examples of outcome measurement surveys developed by selected nonprofits.

Print Resources

Aarons, G. A., & Palinkas, L. A. (2007). Implementation of evidence-based practice in child welfare: Service provider perspectives. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, *34*(4), 411–419.

Magura, S., & Moses, B. S. (2004). *Outcome measures for child welfare services: Theory and applications*. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America.

Plantz, M. C., Greenway, M. T., & Hendricks, M. (1997). Outcome measurement: Showing results in the non-profit sector. *New Directions for Evaluation*, *75*, 15–30. doi.org/10.1002/ev.1077

Testa, M. F., & White, K. R. (2014). Insuring the integrity and validity of social work interventions: The case of the subsidized guardianship waiver experiments. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, *11*, 157–172. doi.org/10.1080/15433714.2013.847260

Research Design and Methodology

This section provides resources on approaches to designing an evaluation or research study. It discusses methodologies such as randomized controlled trials and matched case comparison designs that seek to measure the impact of programs on discrete outcomes. It also discusses "interpretative" designs, such as case studies, that seek insight into perceptions about a program, service, or social phenomenon. The selection of an appropriate design or methodology is generally guided by the specific questions a researcher seeks to answer.

Case Studies

Electronic Resources

Case Study Research: Foundations and Methodological Orientations

Harrison, H., Birks, M., Franklin, R., & Mills, J., 2017

This online article offers a historical perspective on case study methodology and describes how case study theory has been adapted over time and varies across diverse disciplines. It summarizes the evolution of case study research, discusses methodological variations, and offers guidance on various approaches to conducting case studies.

Preparing a Case Study: A Guide for Designing and Conducting a Case Study for Evaluation Input

Pathfinder International, 2006

This guide defines case studies, highlights the advantages and limitations of case study research, describes key steps in the case study process, and identifies potential data sources.

Qualitative Case Study Guidelines

Baškarada, S., The Qualitative Report, 2014

This article discusses methodological problems associated with qualitative case-based research and offers guidelines for overcoming them. It describes a six-stage case study process and integrates and explains additional principles from the wider methodological literature.

Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers

Baxter, P., & Jack, S., The Qualitative Report, 2008

This article reviews various case study designs and offers general recommendations for writing case study research questions, developing propositions, and determining the case under study. It also discusses case study data sources and data triangulation.

Writing Guide: Case Studies

The Writing Studio, Colorado State University, n.d.

This guide provides detailed information on case study designs and research methods. Using several well-documented examples, the guide describes techniques for case study data collection and analysis; discusses validity, reliability, and generalizability in the context of case studies; and examines the strengths and weaknesses of case studies as a research method.

Random Assignment and Matched Case Comparison Designs

Electronic Resources

Random Assignment Evaluation Studies: A Guide for Out-of-School Time Program Practitioners

Anderson Moore, K., & Metz, A., Child Trends, 2008

Developed by Child Trends, this online resource describes the steps for conducting random assignment studies and addresses concerns service providers and practitioners might have about experimental research designs.

Commonly Asked Questions About Random Assignment

James Bell Associates, 2007

This brief answers commonly asked questions and addresses concerns about implementing random assignment designs in human service practice settings. It also summarizes critical steps to successfully implement random assignment.

Conducting Randomized Controlled Trials in Child Welfare Practice Settings: Challenges and Solutions

James Bell Associates, 2013

This brief seeks to familiarize child welfare professionals and evaluators with randomized controlled trials and the value of implementing them in child welfare practice settings. It highlights common challenges in implementing these trials in actual practice settings and offers solutions informed by

the experiences of and lessons learned from current and former Children's Bureau child welfare discretionary grantees.

Propensity Score Matching: Quasi-Experimental Alternative to Random Assignment

James Bell Associates, 2017

As part of the Children's Bureau Resource Library, this webinar discusses propensity score matching as a methodologically rigorous alternative to randomized controlled trials. Using examples from grantees funded through the federal Permanency Innovations Initiative, the webinar discusses the theoretical foundations of propensity score matching, along with techniques for implementing it and validating results. The presenter also reviews caveats and limitations of this statistical technique.

Other Resources

Electronic Resources

Qualitative Evaluation Checklist

Patton, M. Q., Western Michigan University, 2003

This checklist helps evaluators determine when to use qualitative methods and highlights factors to consider when using qualitative methods in an evaluation.

Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide

Family Health International, 2005

This guide to qualitative research methods includes chapters on participant observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and data documentation and management. The guide also contains exercises for training data collectors and tools for data managers.

Selecting an Evaluation Approach

James Bell Associates, 2009

This brief provides an overview of how to develop an overarching evaluation design to guide data collection activities and ensure that the evaluation plan is implemented in a reliable and coherent manner. It highlights programmatic and contextual factors to consider when selecting an evaluation

approach, summarizes the most common types of evaluation designs, and critiques common myths and misconceptions about various evaluation designs and research methods.

Using Qualitative Data in Program Evaluation: Telling the Story of a Prevention Program

FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention, 2009

This webinar discusses the value of qualitative research and provides guidance on designing and conducting qualitative research methods, including ethnographies, case studies, and oral histories.

Working With Small Samples

James Bell Associates, 2015

This brief presents recommendations for designing a small sample study and for working with unplanned small samples in the context of real-life program implementation. It discusses a range of statistical analysis techniques that may be used with small samples and the assumptions and minimum requirements for each.

Print Resources

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. L. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Flick, E. (2018). *The SAGE qualitative research kit: Collection* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Given, L. M. (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (2017). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Goodyear, L., Jewiss, J., Usinger, J., & Barela, E. (2014). *Qualitative inquiry in evaluation: From theory to practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Hancock, D. R., & Algozzine, B. (2017). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Posavac, E. J. (2016). *Program evaluation: Methods and case studies* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ulin, P. R., Robinson, E. T., & Tolley, E. E. (2005). *Qualitative methods in public health: A field guide for applied research.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

White, C. R., O'Brien, K. W., Davis, C. W., Rogg, C., Rudlang-Perman, K., Morgan, L. J., & Houston, M. (2016). Challenges in using comparison data in child welfare evaluations. *Research on Social Work Practice*, *26*(5), 572–582. doi.org/10.1177/1049731514556683

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Data Collection

This section informs the reader about quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, tools, and resources. Quantitative resources include online and print materials on data collection instruments, survey design, and commonly used administrative databases and datasets. Qualitative resources include information on conducting interviews, case studies, and focus groups.

Data Collection Instruments, Tools, and Measures

Electronic Resources

This subsection provides links to online and print collections of standardized screening and assessment instruments for measuring change in child and family outcomes. It also includes print resources on methodological considerations in the selection of appropriate measurement tools.

Child Trends

Child Trends has produced an assortment of tools for measuring child functioning and well-being across multiple domains and contexts.

Early Childhood Measures Profiles

This 2004 report profiles commonly used instruments to measure change in several early childhood domains, including cognitive skills, social-emotional development, learning progress, literacy, and math skills.

Early Childhood Developmental Screening: A Compendium of Measures for Children Ages Birth to Five

This 2014 compendium reviews developmental screening tools designed for use with infants and young children.

Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education Settings: A Compendium of Measures, 2nd Edition

This 2010 compendium profiles assessment tools that measure the quality of early childhood care and education settings.

Sources for Screening and Assessment Tools, Instruments, and Measures

Child Welfare Information Gateway

This web page lists sources for screening and assessment tools, instruments, and measures in the categories of children/youth, parents, family, and trauma.

Compendium of Annotated Measurement Tools

FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

This online compendium serves as a resource for the child abuse prevention community. It summarizes commonly used tools that measure outcomes in community-based child abuse prevention programs. Outcomes and indicators measured by these tools are organized by domain, including child and family health, parenting skills, child development, family relationships, and formal and informal supports. The website also includes measurement tools organized by protective factors, including parental resilience, concrete supports for parents, social connections, nurturing and attachment, and knowledge of parenting and child/youth development.

Interagency Partnerships: A Compendium of Measurement Instruments

James Bell Associates, 2012

This brief reviews key concepts related to measuring organizational partnerships, including levels of partnership (e.g., networking, coordination, cooperation, collaboration) and the benefits of partnerships. It provides an overview of several instruments and analytical techniques to assess the depth or quality of interagency partnerships, and the benefits and limitations of each.

Measuring Child Welfare Outcomes: A Compendium of Standardized Instruments

James Bell Associates, 2015

This compendium summarizes standardized child-, caregiver-, family-, and organization-level instruments commonly used to measure change in child welfare outcomes. Information on each instrument includes its name, target respondents, administration format (e.g., self, trained practitioner), number of items, and topics/domains covered.

Test Link: The Test Collection at ETS

Educational Testing Service (ETS)

Test Link is a database of more than 25,000 tests and other measurement instruments developed by both ETS and outside authors. The database includes information on standardized tests and research instruments for researchers, graduate students, and teachers. While ETS has permission to distribute over 1,200 tests in the collection, users must contact the publisher, individual, or other source listed in the database to obtain permission to use the other instruments.

Print Resources

Braverman, M. T. (2013). Negotiating measurement: Methodological and interpersonal considerations in the choice and interpretation of instruments. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *34*, 99–114. doi.org/10.1177/1098214012460565

Halle, T., Whittaker, J. V., & Anderson, R. (2010). *Quality in early childhood care and education settings: A compendium of* measures (2nd ed.). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Maddox, T. (2008). *Tests: A comprehensive reference for assessments in psychology, education, and business* (6th ed.). Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

Weitzman, B. C., & Silver, D. (2013). Good evaluation measures: More than their psychometric properties*. American Journal of Evaluation*, *34*, 115–119. doi.org/10.1177/1098214012461628

Survey Design and Administration

This subsection highlights several resources on survey design and administration.

Electronic Resources

Conducting Research Surveys via E-mail and the Web

The RAND Corporation, 2002

This free, downloadable e-book discusses the advantages and disadvantages of email- and web-based surveys and suggests ways to design and implement them. It includes real-life case studies to explain the process of designing and implementing Internet-based surveys.

Education/Resources for Researchers

American Association for Public Opinion Research

The American Association for Public Opinion Research, the leading association of public opinion and survey research professionals, includes producers and users of survey data from a variety of disciplines. To disseminate sound and ethical survey research, the website includes tools and resources on best practices in survey research, survey response rates, and survey methods and statistics.

[**Smart Survey Design**](#)

SurveyMonkey, n.d.

This guide provides information on developing effective survey questions, improving survey flow and layout, calculating response rates, and understanding the advantages and disadvantages of online surveys.

[**What Is Market Research?**](#)

Qualtrics

The website of Qualtrics, a technology firm offering web-based survey and analysis tools, includes online articles on topics such as survey question sequence, flow, and style tips; determining sample size; and best practices in survey analysis and reporting.

Print Resources

Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (4th ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Fink, A. (2017). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide* (6th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Fowler, F. (2014). *Survey research methods* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Rea, L. M., & Parker, R. A. (2014). *Designing and conducting survey research: A comprehensive guide* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Qualitative Research and Data Collection Methods

This subsection provides resources on qualitative research and data collection methods, specifically interviews and focus groups.

Electronic Resources

Interviews

Are You Really Listening? Tips for Conducting Qualitative Interviews

McNiff, K., 2017

This article, written by a contributor to the NVivo user community, includes eight simple strategies to prepare for conducting qualitative interviews: make a plan, ask the right kinds of questions, practice, use active listening techniques, listen between the lines, consider the setting, respect participants, and keep control of the interview. The article includes links to other NVivo resources on organizing and analyzing qualitative interview data.

Five Tips for Conducting Effective Qualitative Interviews

Duke University, Global Health Institute, 2018

This article offers insights on conducting in-depth qualitative interviews to ensure data are clear and unbiased, doing interview test runs, and making time for post-interview reflection.

Strategies for Qualitative Interviews

Harvard University, Department of Sociology, n.d.

This brief outlines several helpful strategies for conducting qualitative interviews. It reviews the pros and cons of recording and transcribing interviews, summarizes the characteristics of a successful interviewer, provides tips for ensuring a positive interpersonal encounter, offers guidelines for developing interview questions, and includes step-by-step guidance for writing interview questions.

Using Structured Interviewing Techniques

U.S. General Accounting Office, Program Evaluation and Methodology Division, 1991

This publication defines structured interviews; describes appropriate situations in which to use them; and offers detailed guidance on the steps in planning and conducting structured interviews, including

designing and pretesting an interview protocol, training interviewers, contacting and interviewing respondents, and analyzing interview data.

Focus Groups

Conducting Focus Groups

University of Kansas, Center for Community Health and Development

This online resource reviews the steps to plan, prepare, conduct, and use focus group results to gain a deeper understanding of community issues and needs. It includes several checklists, examples of successful and failed focus groups, and a PowerPoint presentation that summarizes the information provided on the website.

Guidelines for Conducting a Focus Group

Eliot & Associates, 2005

This brief monograph offers guidelines for conducting high-quality focus groups, including step-by-step instructions for making sense of the information collected in the group. It includes checklists for defining a focus group, designing focus group questions, recruiting and preparing for participants, conducting the focus group, and analyzing data. It also includes examples of focus group questions, a recruitment flyer, an invitee tracking form, introductory remarks, a sample consent form, data analysis formats, and a reporting template.

Print Resources

Bloor, M., Frankland, J., Thomas, M., & Robson, K. (2002). *Focus groups in social research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fujii, L. A. (2018). *Interviewing in social science research: A relational approach.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Gubrium, J. F., Holstein, J. A., Marvasti, A. B., & McKinney, K. D. (Eds.). (2012). *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. (2015). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research* (5th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Rennkamp, R., & Nall, M. (n.d.). *Using focus groups in program development and evaluation.* Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

Seidman, I. (2013). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Wolcott, H. F. (2009). *Writing up qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Child Welfare Information Systems, Databases, and Datasets

This subsection highlights administrative data systems and sources that compile information about children, families, and communities at the local, state, and national levels. Some of these resources offer public access to aggregate-level data.

Electronic Resources

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau

AFCARS is a federal reporting system that collects and aggregates case-level information from states and tribal governments on all children in out-of-home placement, and on children who are adopted under the auspices of a state or tribal public child welfare agency. This website also includes information on foster and adoptive parents. It contains detailed information regarding the purpose and uses of AFCARS data, AFCARS data reporting requirements, AFCARS resources for states (e.g., technical bulletins), and adoption and foster care statistics from recent AFCARS reports.

National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau

NCANDS is a voluntary national data collection and analysis system created in response to the requirements of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (Public Law 93-247) that gathers information from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico about reports of child abuse and neglect. This website includes links to more detailed information regarding the NCANDS survey instrument completed by states, and child welfare statistics and outcome reports that include NCANDS data.

National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN)

Cornell University, College of Human Ecology

A service of the Children's Bureau provided through Cornell University, NDACAN facilitates the secondary analysis of research data relevant to the study of child abuse and neglect. By making data available to increasing numbers of researchers, NDACAN seeks to provide an accessible and scientifically productive means for researchers to explore important issues in the child maltreatment field. Specifically, NDACAN offers researchers access to datasets derived from the National Survey on Child and Adolescent Well-Being, AFCARS, and NCANDS, among others.

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau

Developed in response to the establishment of the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP), NYTD collects case-level information on youth in foster care who receive services paid for or provided by state child welfare agencies that administer CFCIP, along with outcome information on youth who are in or who have aged out of foster care. Pursuant to regulations developed by the Administration for Children and Families to comply with CFCIP, states began collecting data for NYTD in October 2010 and report data on a semiannual basis. The website includes links to more detailed information, including technical bulletins, informational memoranda, and other technical assistance resources.

State and Tribal Information Systems

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau

States and tribes maintain child welfare information systems, including the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System and legacy State/Tribal Automated Child Welfare Information Systems, that serve as case management tools for child welfare professionals and as data sources for federal reporting systems such as AFCARS and NCANDS. This website provides information regarding the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System final rule, training resources for developing and maintaining information systems, and information about legacy systems.

KIDS COUNT

Annie E. Casey Foundation

KIDS COUNT is a premier source of data on the welfare of children and families nationwide. Each year, the Annie E. Casey Foundation produces an annual comprehensive report, the KIDS COUNT Data Book, that assesses child and family well-being in the United States. The indicators featured in the Data Book are also available in the KIDS COUNT Data Center, which has additional state-by-state data. Data elements include demographics, economic well-being, educational achievement, family and community well-being, health, safety, and risky behaviors.

American Community Survey

U.S. Census Bureau

The American Community Survey is distributed to 3.5 million U.S. citizens annually and provides year-by-year data from 2005 to the present. Results are summarized in data profiles about broad social, economic, housing, and demographic characteristics and are available by census tracks to present a granular view of local communities. The U.S. Census Bureau offers technical assistance and support for accessing and interpreting the data.

Mining Administrative Data: Identifying and Understanding At-Risk Populations

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, 2017

As part of the Children's Bureau Resource Library, this webinar discusses strategies for mining administrative data to assess the characteristics and needs of at-risk child welfare populations. Using examples from the federally funded Permanency Innovations Initiative, the webinar identifies the key requirements of productive data mining, steps in the data mining process, and useful statistical techniques for analyzing and making sense of administrative data.

Data Analysis

This section lists tools and resources for understanding and conducting quantitative and qualitative data analysis as part of program evaluation or social science research. It also includes technical assistance resources and information on free and fee-based data analysis software packages.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Electronic Resources

Center for State Child Welfare Data

University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children

The Center for State Child Welfare Data provides membership-based education, training, and technical assistance to help child welfare professionals and leaders make sense of administrative data. Its course, Advanced Analytics for Child Welfare Administration, teaches agency administrators methods to analyze longitudinal administrative data and apply these techniques to programmatic decision making, fiscal planning, program evaluation, CQI, and ongoing performance monitoring.

40 Excel Tutorials to Change Your Life

Digital.com

This website presents tutorials about how to use Microsoft Excel for data management, analysis, and visualization.

Introduction to Databases

Stanford University Online

This free, online course on database design includes video lectures and demonstrations with quizzes to check mastery of new material, interactive program exercises, midterm and final exams, and links to additional resources.

Predictive Analytics in Child Welfare

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

This online resource contains links to several products that focus on the use of predictive analytics in child welfare, including successes and challenges encountered by early adopters of predictive analytics, the potential of predictive analytics to improve child welfare outcomes, and factors to consider when selecting vendors to conduct predictive analytics.

Using Excel for Analyzing Survey Questionnaires

Leahy, J., University of Wisconsin-Extension, 2004

This guide includes step-by-step instructions for analyzing survey data using Microsoft Excel. It provides detailed information about creating an Excel database and coding, entering, cleaning, and analyzing Excel data.

Print Resources

Bors, D. (2018). *Data analysis for the social sciences: Integrating theory and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Bryman, A., & Cramer, D. (2011). *Quantitative data analysis with SPSS 17,18 and 19: A guide for social scientists.* Sussex, England: Routledge.

Levin, J., Fox, J. A., & Forde, D. R. (2013). *Elementary statistics in social research* (12th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson.

Montcalm, D., & Royse, D. (2002). *Data analysis for social workers*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Vogt, W. P., & Johnson R. B. (2016). *The SAGE dictionary of statistics & methodology: A nontechnical guide for the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Weinbach, R. W., & Grinnell, R. M. (2015). *Statistics for social workers* (9th ed.). New York, NY: Pearson Press.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Electronic Resources

Analyzing Qualitative Data

Taylor-Powell, E., & Renner, M., University of Wisconsin- Extension, 2003

This article outlines a basic approach for analyzing and interpreting narrative data. It begins by describing various types of narrative data and then offers a step-by-step guide to content analysis. The article provides tips for organizing and sorting qualitative data, offers examples of coding and documenting emerging themes, and highlights common pitfalls to avoid when analyzing qualitative data.

[**Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis: A Hybrid Approach of Inductive and Deductive Coding and Theme Development**](#)

Fereday, J., & Muir-Cochrane, E., 2006

This article describes a hybrid process of inductive and deductive thematic analysis used to interpret raw interview data and data extracted from organizational records. The methodological approach integrates data-driven codes with theory-driven codes based on the tenets of social phenomenology.

[**Reducing Confusion About Grounded Theory and Qualitative Content Analysis: Similarities and Differences**](#)

Cho, J. C., & Lee, E., 2014

This article identifies similarities and differences between grounded theory and qualitative content analysis based on a literature review and critical reflection of the authors' own research. Areas of difference that are explored include their background and philosophical base, goals and rationale, data analysis processes, research outcomes, and approaches to evaluating trustworthiness.

Print Resources

Baker, C. D. (2002). Ethnomethodological analyses of interviews. In J. Gubrium & J. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interviewing: Context and method* (pp. 777–795). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Grbich, C. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: An introduction* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hsieh, H. F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, *15*(9), 1277–1288.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014) *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Roulston, K. (2014). Analyzing interview data. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 297–312). London, England: Sage Publications.

Data Analysis Software

This section provides links to information about free and fee-based quantitative and qualitative data analysis software packages.

AM Statistical Software

American Institutes for Research

This free software is designed to analyze large-scale assessment datasets. It offers tools for running simple statistics such as frequencies, and more complex procedures such as regression analysis and statistical weighting. Users can import data from a variety of sources (e.g., Excel, SPSS) and display output in a text file or web browser.

ATLAS.ti

This commercially available software segments, sorts, and analyzes information from a range of qualitative data sources in formats including text, graphics, audio, and video.

Dedoose

This commercially available software analyzes qualitative and mixed methods data sources such as text, photos, audio and video, and spreadsheets.

NVivo

QSR International

This commercially available software consists of a series of tools for classifying, sorting, and arranging qualitative information to efficiently identify themes in the data and arrive at meaningful conclusions.

SAS

SAS Institute

This commercially available software offers basic and advanced statistical analysis tools for descriptive analyses, hypothesis testing, and predictive analytics.

SPSS Statistics

IBM

This commercially available software from IBM offers basic and advanced statistical analysis tools for descriptive analyses, hypothesis testing, and predictive analytics.

Reporting and Using Evaluation Findings

This section offers resources on communicating, reporting, and disseminating evaluation findings effectively to diverse audiences. It also includes subsections on data-driven decision making (DDDM) and CQI, which incorporate methods for using research and evaluation data in an iterative fashion to drive ongoing program and organizational improvements.

Communicating and Disseminating Evaluation Findings

Electronic Resources

10 Tips for Writing Up Results

American College Personnel Association Commission for Assessment and Evaluation, 2007

This brief tip sheet provides guidelines on writing up results in an evaluation report and includes references to additional resources.

Analysis and Reporting of Evaluation Results

Corporation for National and Community Service

This free, online course is designed to help state and national AmeriCorps programs communicate and disseminate evaluation results to stakeholders, offer guidance in writing an evaluation report, familiarize users with other reporting tools and resources, and help users use evaluation findings to foster program development and improvement. This site also provides links to other evaluation courses developed by the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Communicating Evaluation Findings

Hearn, S., BetterEvaluation, 2012

This blog post informs the reader about communicating evaluation results, emphasizing new ways to communicate evaluation findings and free and low-cost tools for data visualization and reporting.

Communicating Evaluation Results

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies

This web page informs users about communicating evaluation results from prevention interventions to promote their implementation and sustainability. The site also provides links to additional resources on reporting evaluation findings, including an **overview** of the elements of a good data report.

Stories

BetterEvaluation

This web page explores the use of personal stories in evaluation, offers examples of how stories have been used to inform program improvement and adaptation, and provides guidance on collecting and communicating stories. The site also includes additional resources on storytelling methods.

Data Visualization: What It Is and Why It Matters

SAS Institute

This page on the SAS website informs the reader of the history of data visualization, factors to consider when adopting data visualization technology, tips for choosing a visualization format, and links to additional resources.

Evaluation Reporting: A Guide to Help Ensure Use of Evaluation Findings

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2013

This guide was developed as part of a series of evaluation tools to help federal grantees promote the use of evaluation findings. It highlights key elements of a high-quality report and offers recommendations for disseminating findings. The guide also includes an extensive resource list and evaluation report checklist to help ensure that the results are used.

Reporting and Presenting Evaluation Findings

James Bell Associates, 2013

This brief reviews factors to consider when reporting and presenting evaluation results to various audiences, including the identity and needs of the audience, the nature of the findings, and effective techniques for presenting findings.

Making Evidence Matter: Tips for Researchers

Mathematica Policy Research, 2018

This blog post on Mathematica Policy Research's website provides information and tips on how to make information accessible, meaningful, and relevant to policy makers to promote more informed decision making.

The One-Pager: A Practical Policy Advocacy Tool for Translating Community-Based Participatory Research Into Action

Izumi, B. T., Schulz, A. J., Israel, B. A., Reyes, A. G., Martin, J., Lichtenstein, R. L., Wilson, C., & Sand, S. L., 2010

This article describes a community-based participatory research process to develop and use a one-page summary of research findings that engages stakeholders and translates findings into concrete action. The article includes a template for a one-pager and an example of a one-pager presented to federal policy makers.

Print Resources

Evergreen, S. (2017). *Presenting data effectively: Communicating your findings for maximum impact* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Data-Driven Decision Making

This subsection highlights online resources on data-driven decision making (DDDM), a systematic process for deciding on a course of action based on data.

Electronic Resources

Data-Driven Decision Making Toolkit

Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services and Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2013

This toolkit was designed to support the consistent integration of DDDM principles and strategies into the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services day-to-day operations, and to evolve as new organizational learning occurs. The guide is divided into two parts: section one provides background on the context, purpose, and lessons learned from the initial DDDM process; section two contains practical tools for implementing DDDM.

Guide to Data-Driven Decision Making: Using Data to Inform Practice and Policy Decisions in Child Welfare Organizations

James Bell Associates, 2018

This guide explains DDDM and the steps to apply DDDM concepts to organizations and service systems. It features tools, such as memorandums of understanding and confidentiality agreements, that can be adapted and used in various organizational settings. The guide is accompanied by a **three-part video series** that shows how a fictional child welfare agency set out to improve permanency outcomes for children using DDDM.

How States Use Data to Inform Decisions: A National Review of the Use of Administrative Data to Improve State Decision-Making

The PEW Charitable Trusts, 2018

This report highlights ways in which government leaders have used data analytics to craft policy responses to complex problems, improve service delivery, manage existing resources, and examine policy and program effectiveness. The authors identify key actions state leaders can take to build the capacity of stakeholders to use data effectively, ensure access to quality data, and analyze data to create meaningful information that drives decision making.

Using Evaluation Data to Promote Program Sustainability

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, 2017

This webinar reviews strategies for using evaluation findings to sustain program and evaluation activities after federal discretionary grants have ended. It reviews and discusses the sustainability planning and activities of two grantees funded through the federal Permanency Innovations Initiative.

Continuous Quality Improvement

This subsection includes links to online resources on CQI, a systematic approach to using data collection and change strategies to improve the performance of a program or practice.

Electronic Resources

Continuous Quality Improvement

Child Welfare Information Gateway

This toolkit provides an overview of CQI concepts and principles and links to resources developed by local child welfare agencies for engaging in the CQI process.

Continuous Quality Improvement Toolkit: A Resource for Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program Awardees

James Bell Associates, 2017

Developed for the Administration for Children and Families in partnership with the Health Resources and Services Administration within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this toolkit features nine modules that cover key CQI concepts and skills, including the Plan-Do-Study-Act process and root cause analysis. While developed for home visiting projects, its contents may also be relevant to other human service programs.

Spotlight on Continuous Quality Improvement

Children's Bureau Express, 2013

This edition of the *Children's Bureau Express* discusses a number of CQI resources, including the Administration for Children and Families Information Memorandum "Establishing and Maintaining Continuous Quality Improvement Systems in State Child Welfare Agencies."

[Using Continuous Quality Improvement to Improve Child Welfare Practice: A Framework for Implementation](#)

Casey Family Programs and National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement, 2005

This document synthesizes a convening of CQI experts to develop a comprehensive framework to guide development and implementation of CQI systems in child welfare agencies. It offers strategies for agencies to develop and implement CQI systems and processes to improve child welfare programs and practices.

Summary Matrix of Online Evaluation Resources

This matrix provides an at-a-glance summary of the online resources included in this guide. Resources in **bold** are especially relevant to research and evaluation conducted in child welfare organizations and practice settings.

Title	Source/Author	Link	Page
Understanding Program Evaluation			
General Resources on Program Evaluation			
Program Manager's Guide to Evaluation, 2nd Edition	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 2010	https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource/the-program-managers-guide-to-evaluation-second-edition	2
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